

# Former Agent Tells of C.I.A.'s Interest in

By RICHARD EDER

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, July 11—"I did not write this book for the K.G.B. I wrote it for revolutionary organizations in the United States, in Latin America and everywhere else. I wrote it as a contribution to the socialist revolution."

Philip Agee, a graduate of a Jesuit school and Notre Dame University and for 12 years an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency, was explaining why, after resigning from the agency six years ago, he had decided to write a book describing its operations in the three countries where he was stationed—Ecuador, Uruguay and Mexico.

The book, a lengthy work written in the form of a diary, is to be published in Britain by Penguin. No publication date has been set, but Mr. Agee expects it to appear next spring.

## U.S. Influence the Target

The New York Times published an article last week quoting reliable sources in Washington as having said that the C.I.A. had reorganized its operations in the Western Hemisphere after one of its agents, when drunk, had disclosed aspects of the organization to agents of the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence agency. No specific C.I.A. agent was named.

A few days later, however, it was reported that the C.I.A. reorganization was the result of concern that Mr. Agee would reveal information about the agency's operations in Latin America, but his possible involvement with the K.G.B. remained unclear. Mr. Agee denied yesterday that he had ever given information to the K.G.B.

Mr. Agee's book recounts in specific detail his experiences with the C.I.A., including his recruitment and his training, and the operations he knew of at his three posts. The book's detail is extensive; it includes names of agents and contacts.

But Mr. Agee says that his main target in writing the book was not so much the C.I.A. as what he holds to be the destructiveness of American influence around the world.

"I didn't want to write just a bunch of spy stories," he said this week. "I wanted to put the C.I.A. in the context of the political and economic reality of Latin America. I wanted to show how, by beating down anything to the left, we just reinforce the status quo, the hold of the oligarchy on the great mass

of people."

In brief, as Mr. Agee told it, his quarrel was less with the C.I.A.'s methods than with the political purposes for which they were used. His book was the product of eight years of radicalization, from his arrival in Latin America as an idealistic young spy, believing in reform and the Alliance for Progress, to his departure from the agency in 1968, convinced of the need for socialist revolutions and some eventual form of communism.

## Wary of Bird Watchers

Mr. Agee talked for several hours, sitting in the garden of his rented cottage on the Cornwall coast. Just below, thousands of birds dabbled on the tidal flats, and throughout the overcast afternoon cars drove up, discharging relays of bird watchers with field glasses. And from time to time Mr. Agee, a tanned, dark-haired man of 39 years, would get up, peer over the bushes at them, then resume his seat.

He has felt under pressure since he began his book. Part of this has come from what he is convinced was C.I.A. surveillance; another part he is more hesitant to discuss, but, essentially, it amounts to a concern that persons involved in operations he knows about will try to get to him before the book comes out.

This concern has lent a guarded quality to his life while he has been writing his book, over the last four years—first in Mexico, then in Paris, then in Britain, with three short trips to Cuba. It is also one of the reasons for refusing, in the interview, to describe the episodes he relates in the book.

He did tell, however, of the C.I.A.'s effort to recruit him in the nineteen-fifties

when he was in college, the recruiting officer offering a package plan by which young men could combine their draft duty with joining the agency.

"I turned it down at Notre Dame," he recalled, "but later at Florida Law School I was about to be drafted so I wrote in asking if it was still open."

The C.I.A. draftees were not identified in any way, he said, and went through basic training in the regular fashion:

"It was for maturing, they said. We were just like everyone else except that in the orders our names had three X's in front of them. The agency made sure we were selected for Officers' Candi-

date School and then sent on to duties as intelligence officers."

He also spoke briefly of his last C.I.A. post, in Mexico.

"I was in Washington on the Mexico desk," he said. "It was the time of the Olympics, and we got a message that the Ambassador wanted an Olympics attaché, and that it would be a good spot for someone in the agency to fill."

"I cut my orders for it, you might say, and went."

## When Disillusion Came

As Olympics attaché Mr. Agee said, he had a special opportunity to mix widely. There was a big national effort in Mexico to promote the games, and many people the agency was interested in were involved: Professionals, artists, politicians.

"It was a good time to recruit locals," he said. "It was especially useful for bringing in Mexican politicians."

But even before he went to Mexico, Mr. Agee had become disillusioned with his work. When the Olympics were over, he resigned, and went to work in a small business with some Mexican friends.

"My only thought at first was to forget the agency," he said. "But there was Vietnam, and I realized that what we were doing on a big scale in Vietnam I had been doing on a lower scale in Latin America."

"The agency's job was to keep the lid on. All we had been doing in Latin America was to keep insurgency down at a lower level than in Vietnam. But the principles were the same. It was American imperialism."

## 'Reform Just Rhetoric'

What had brought him, he was asked, to this extreme-left analysis of America's role?

"When I went to Ecuador in 1960 it was the time when democratic reform seemed to be the way out for Latin America," he said. "It was the time of the reformers: Betancourt in Venezuela, Muñoz Marín in Puerto Rico, Figueres in Costa Rica, Kubitschek in Brazil."

The methods we used in the agency were rationalized as buying time for the moderate reformers to make the reforms that were needed. But the longer I was there, the more I felt that liberal reform was a contradiction, that it was just rhetoric. I realized that society was not getting integrated, that the oligarchies and the masses were as far apart as ever. I realized that the Alliance for Progress was just a subsidy

program for U. S. business."

This disillusion, he continued, made him realize that the far left, which he was professionally dedicated to fighting, in fact stood for what he believed in. And it concluded that only some form of socialist revolution could bring about genuine change.

## To Paris and a Publisher

Mr. Agee began work on his book in Mexico in 1969. The next year, he moved to Paris, where he met the publisher François Maspero. Mr. Maspero, who will publish the book in French, gave him an advance that supported him for a while.

In 1971, he said, the C.I.A. became aware of what he was doing. He had committed "the mistake" of writing to a Uruguayan magazine, identifying himself as a former C.I.A. agent; he warned that the agency was likely to intervene in an election campaign then going on, and revealed that he was writing a book on the subject.

Not long afterward he was visited in Paris by a C.I.A. man whom he knew and who questioned him about his plans. It was after this, he said, that something odd began. It amounted—as he sees it—to the C.I.A. subsidizing his book. A wealthy American girl of Venezuelan origin moved into the small hotel where he was living and befriended him.

## Something in a Typewriter

"She took a great interest in the book," he said. "I was out of money by then. It got to the point where I had to return my rented typewriter for the sake of the deposit. She and another American who moved in at the same time began giving me money."

Mr. Agee said he had some suspicions about her. These, he said, grew to certainty after she lent him a typewriter and seemed upset when, because he was using tapes at the time rather than of writing, he did not use the typewriter.

He began to notice that his radio made peculiar sounds when the typewriter was moved close to it, examining the typewriter's case, he found a piece of plywood. When he removed it, he said, he found a complicated assemblage of miniature electronic devices in it. He is not certain whether this was used simply to provide a direc-

## His Diary Disillusion

tional signal, or for something more complicated.

Although he was now certain that the girl was an agent, he continued to see her: "I needed the money."

He said that C.I.A. representatives also visited his estranged wife—they are now divorced—in the United States, and told her that they would pay Mr. Agee if he would abandon the book.

In 1972 Mr. Agee moved to London to see the British Museum's newspaper library. His book, he said, will take the form of a diary in which his own recollections are set against the background of events taking place in Latin America at the time. In London, he obtained an advance from Penguin, which allowed him to discontinue his less orthodox form of support.

Mr. Agee expects to remain in Britain until his book comes out. He has been assured, he said, that there is no legal way that publication of it can be stopped here. If he moved to the United States he could be subject to the kind of legal action that the CIA took against another forthcoming book by a former employe, Victor L. Marchetti. A number of passages in the book, "The C.I.A. and the Cult of Intelligence," which Mr. Marchetti wrote with John D. Merks, a former State Department intelligence analyst, were deleted by court order.

#### A Look Homeward

Once the book is published, Mr. Agee said, he will move back to the United States. "I want to join a political group," he said. He added that he belonged to no party now and was not certain which group he would try to join. Asked whether he was a Communist, he replied:

"Not if you mean by that a person who has joined the Communist party. But if you speak of a socialist revolution, to which I hope to contribute, you're speaking of the construction of a socialist society and eventually of Communism. Communism is not a matter of belonging. It is a way of living."

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